

REMARKS

Claims 1-30 are pending. Claim 31 has been added. Claims 1-31 remain in the case for reconsideration. Reconsideration is requested. No new subject matter has been added.

Claim Objections

Claims 13, 20-21, and 23 have been rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore claims 13, 20-21, and 23 are in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 12-13, 25, and 28-30 are rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The claims have been amended as suggested by the Examiner and are therefore allowable under 35 USC 112.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4, 6-8, 14-18 and 24-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Fransson et al. (US 6,445,706).

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 5, 11-12, and 27-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fransson in view of Holden et al. (US 6,188,690). Claims 9-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fransson in view of DeGrandpre et al. (US 6,678,275). Claims 19 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fransson in view of Dunstan (US 6,654,371).

The independent claims have been amended to more clearly specify conducting separate independent arbitrations for each of the multiple output ports. Additional dependant claims have been amended to include the limitation of the input ports receiving multiple grants from the arbitration circuit for multiple output ports and accepting one of the grants and rejecting the other received grants. The arbitration circuit then conducting another arbitration phase with separate independent arbitrations for any of the output ports that did not receive grant acceptance from input ports during the first arbitration phase.

This is all clearly described in FIGS. 4 and 5 of the specification. The multiple arbitration scheme described provides an effective convergence for network processing devices that establish multiple input and output port connections during the same time slot. Page 3, lines 21-25.

Conversely, Fransson only provides one output port connection for any particular time slot. See FIG. 3 where switch S13 only connects one of the links 0-n to the output port at a time. The arbitration scheme described in Fransson does not provide multiple concurrent output port arbitrations and therefore can not converge multiple input ports with multiple output ports as specified in the present claims.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-31 of the application as amended is solicited. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at (503) 222-3613 if it appears that an interview would be helpful in advancing the case.

Respectfully submitted,

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